

Psalm 1:1-6

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/ps/ps-1/psalm-11-6/>

God's way is meant for our benefit and blessing. When we rebel, when we sin, or mock, or go our own way, we will reap loss and death. To love God's law, to know it, and practice it, leads us to spiritual health and peace. God will judge all people and all actions in the end. The man who seeks to be right with God is like a fruit tree growing by a stream, healthy and strong, whereas the wicked man is compared to withering leaves and useless chaff blown away by the wind, for all he does is ultimately meaningless and will fall away.

This psalm begins with an an assertion, saying *How blessed is the man*, then lists three different things that will cause the man to be *blessed*. The word translated *blessed* is also translated "happy." It is the idea of gaining great fortune. The three things that cause a man to be *blessed*, happy, or fortunate are if he is a man:

- *who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,*
 - - To walk in the counsel of someone is to follow their ways.
 - A man is blessed if he does not follow the ways of the
 - The word translated *wicked* can also be translated "evil." The advice for a path to happiness and blessing begins with an avoidance. To be happy or blessed, don't listen to people who are evil or *wicked*.
- *Nor stand in the path of sinners,*
 - *Sinners* are those who break the law of God.
 - Jesus stated that the essence of the law of God was to love our neighbors like we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39). *Sinners* desire to do the opposite. They desire to exploit and extract from others. They serve and become a slave to their own appetites.
- *Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!*
 - The context here would indicate the thing being scoffed at is God's law. God's law directs us to love others, and serve rather than oppress and exploit the vulnerable.
 - The scoffer might think they will gain great pleasure at the expense of others, but they will actually find misery and loss. For the consequences (wages) of sin is always death (Romans 6:23).

In the Bible, God defines evil as going against His way. *Sinners* are those who choose evil over good. *Scoffers* are those who mock the idea that someone else (God, for instance) knows what is best for them other than themselves. *Scoffers* define truth for themselves. No one tells them what to do.

The way of God's law is for people to love one another, speak the truth to one another, and care for others the same way they care for themselves. This is the path to happiness and blessing. The

way of *wickedness* is often through exploitation of others, abusing and misleading them to satisfy our own appetites. When the way of *wickedness* does not involve abusing or exploiting others, it often involves abusing or exploiting ourselves. An example might be abusing drugs. In an attempt to create our own reality, we might abuse drugs, and exploit our own body.

The man who is “blessed” avoids following sinners. He does not heed the counsel of the wicked. And he does not allow himself to become a scoffer. That is what he avoids. But what he sows into is the *law of the Lord*. The man who is “blessed” does not only learn and follow the *law of the Lord*. *But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night.*

The man who is “blessed” is not a begrudging adherent to God’s law. The man who is “blessed” sees the law as an incredible benefit. He views it like a delicious meal. He is not merely eating to survive. He is enjoying the meal. It is *his delight*. He attributes such value to the *law of the Lord* that he *meditates* on the tenants of God’s law *day and night*. This is because he properly sees the Lord’s ways as the ways to gain the greatest benefit from this life. It is the true path to happiness.

The *law of the Lord* is contained in the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Numbers. Jesus stated that the entire law and prophets depended on two statements. We can take from this that the *law of the Lord* might be summed up with these two statements:

1. “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.”
 1. Jesus stated “This is the great and foremost commandment.”
 2. Then Jesus said, “The second is like it,
2. ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’”

Jesus said “On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37-40). That means these two statements summarize the primary message of the Old Testament.

So when the Psalmist says that the path to happiness or blessing comes from avoiding wickedness, and rather delighting in, meditating upon, and living out the law of God, the Psalmist is stating that living these two great commandments is the path to the greatest blessing and fulfillment of this life.

The man who delights in the “law of God,” who meditates and lives the law, *will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season*. The picture here seems to be of a fruit tree in an irrigated orchard. An irrigation canal brings *streams of water* to the fruit tree. Just as irrigation is to a fruit tree, so the “law of the Lord” is for the human soul. The fruit tree *yields its fruit in its season*. It does not suffer drought from lack of water, so *its leaf does not wither*.

In like manner, when we follow God’s ways, hear His word, and live His word, then we are like that irrigated fruit tree. The word of God nourishes that man. Therefore, like the fruit tree *in whatever he does, he prospers*. The prosperity he gains will be the lasting kind. The kind that

God will reward. The kind that nourishes the soul. It of course takes discipline to set aside our appetites in order to serve others, and love them like we love ourselves. But that is the path to our greatest happiness. When we exploit or abuse, we lose ourselves. When we serve and love, we find ourselves.

But *The wicked are not so*. They are not like an irrigated fruit tree. The appropriate picture for the wicked is *like chaff which the wind drives away*. Chaff is the husk and stalk of threshed grain. It is thrown into the air so it will blow away. The seed is heavy, so falls to the ground, and produces useful fruit. The chaff blows away in the wind, and has no lasting impact or benefit. So it is with the wicked, the sinners, and the scoffers.

Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, when God judges the deeds of men. In the New Testament book of Romans, written roughly a thousand years after this psalm, the Apostle Paul states that there will be a “righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS” (Romans 2:5b-6). Paul states that “those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness” will receive in the judgement “wrath and indignation” from God (Romans 2:8).

The judgement of deeds will apply to all people. Those who believe in Christ will have their deeds judged to see what rewards they gain for the investments in God’s kingdom they made during their lives (1 Corinthians 3:11-17; 2 Corinthians 5:10). But all self-seeking, exploitation, and abuse will be chastised by God. That is why those who are sinners, and those who practice wickedness *will not stand in the judgement*. They will be like a tree that is felled, rather than a tree that produces fruit, and stands tall and straight because of the nourishment of the irrigation.

Similarly, *sinners will not stand in the assembly of the righteous*. In the day of judgement, God will open the books, and all deeds will be judged (Revelation 20:2). Those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will be thrown into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15). Believers who waste their opportunity to live faithfully, serving others, and instead exploit others and serve their own appetites will have their deeds burned in the fire of God’s judgement. If all his works are burned up, he himself will be saved, though as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:14-15).

This is because *the Lord knows the way of the righteous*. God is watching. God will make sure that everyone gets the rewards they deserve. To “those who by perseverance in doing good” and live as the *righteous*, and “seek for glory and honor and immortality” from God, seeking His approval, God will give them the reward of “eternal life”—meaning the greatest possible experience of life.

God gives eternal life as a free gift for all those who believe; those who have enough faith to look upon Jesus, hoping to be healed of the poison of sin (John 3:14-15). In this way, eternal life is a gift. All who believe will live forever in the presence of God, as His child. God is always the inheritance of believers (Romans 8:17a). Nothing can separate any believer from the love of God (Romans 8:37-39). But just like physical birth, which is a gift of life, who we become in life depends upon our choices. We can experience a physical life that is blessed or one that is miserable and wretched.

The same holds true in the spiritual realm. If we have enough faith to believe, we are in God's family, and are unconditionally accepted by Him. We have the gift of eternal life. But in order to gain the experience of eternal life, we must walk in obedience to His ways. We must internalize His ways, meditate upon His ways, and walk in His ways. As the Apostle Paul states "For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Galatians 6:8). This verse again speaks of eternal life as a reward.

God will prosper the way of those who sow to the Spirit. *But the way of the wicked will perish.* Any work of a believer that is wicked will be burned in the fire of God's judgement as wood, hay, and straw. But deeds done in obedience to God will be like gold, silver, and precious stones; the fire will refine them, and make them even more precious (1 Corinthians 3:12).

Biblical Text

**How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!**

**² But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law he meditates day and night.**

**³ He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.**

**⁴ The wicked are not so,
But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.**

**⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.**

**⁶ For the Lord knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked will perish.**